The connecting thread that runs through this thesis is the attempt to read the text of Lamentations as representing a melancholic who suffers from several of its symptoms. The term melancholia is used in a psychoanalytical sense, specifically as it is set out in Freud's essay "Mourning and Melancholia." The first chapter explores some of the symptoms of the text, previous interpretational treatments, and then offers an interpretation of these symptoms as evidence of melancholia. The second chapter relates Julia
A text about the trauma of the loss of a son, J. M. Coetzee’s The Master of Petersburg reads as a mourning text. According to Freud (and others), one of the symptoms of melancholia is identification with and interiorisation of the lost object. Similarly, Derrida points out the danger of narcissistic identification with the lost one and the danger of mourning oneself instead of the other, “in saying ‘we’ (or, worse, ‘me’) instead of ‘you’” (Brault and Naas 5-6). Discussing melancholia, Gillian Rose argues that “to incorporate the dead one into one’s body and soul is to refuse the work of mourning, to refuse to let go” (103). Gillian Rose argues that mourning is impossible within the city walls, it can only take place outside the walls of the city. While these two texts might be seen as diametrically opposed in tone and conclusion, they share a basic narrative: that of the total triumph of fully industrialized, global capitalism and its consequences for political systems (Fukuyama) and ecological conditions and relations (McKibben). The end of history, emblematized by the fall of the Berlin Wall and the decline of Communist governments, means the vanquishing of the great Other of actually-existing Marxism and the “unabashed victory of economic and political liberalism.” This constitutive absence is also the central theme of the poem, which narrates subject-formation as a form of elegiac self-recognition that takes ecological destruction as its tragic precondition. View Racial Melancholia Research Papers on Academia.edu for free. Recent applications of Freud’s theory examine the social value of the lost love object as a way of understanding the suffering of non-majority groups. Rather than pathologizing the individual suffering the loss, the lens of racial melancholia pathologizes the discourse that constitutes racially marked others as alien to the majority. Through a close reading...